



# NEW ENGLAND BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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November 24, 2020

Members of the New England Congressional Delegation  
United States Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Senators and Representatives:

On behalf of New England's 260 public and independent postsecondary institutions, we thank you for your continued leadership in support of students and institutions facing the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We write to again seek your support for additional, and urgently needed, aid to students and institutions. Specifically:

- Many New England students and their families are struggling with reduced incomes or job loss, creating surging demand for increased student aid.
- Costs associated with resuming classes this fall were significantly higher than anticipated. New England institutions faced new expenses related to regular virus testing, contact tracing, health monitoring, quarantining, building reconfigurations, expanded health services, intensified cleaning and the ongoing transition to virtual learning.
- Given that state appropriations have not yet returned to levels preceding the 2008 recession and given the significant loss of state revenues from the steep and recent collapse of current economic activity, additional funds to states are needed—for the express purpose of maintaining appropriations to postsecondary institutions and aid programs. Institutions face notable budget challenges given planned reductions to state budget allocations if additional federal aid is not provided. Expected reductions in New England states range from 5% to 15% and will have a significant impact on already fragile institutional finances.
- Given the unpredictable nature of the pandemic and its ongoing demands, extend the deadline for Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) recipients to spend their CRF allocations from December 30, 2020 to December 31, 2021.
- Data released by the National Student Clearinghouse indicate that New England's institutions experienced undergraduate enrollment declines this fall over the previous year across all sectors: -10.2% at community colleges, -3.8% at public four-year institutions, and -1.1% at private not-for-profit four-year institutions. While undergraduate enrollment figures vary from institution to institution, if overall reductions persist in at these levels through the end of the academic year, NEBHE projects lost tuition and fee revenue for New England's higher education sectors in AY 2020-21 as follows:
  - Two-Year Institutions: \$150 million.

- Public Four-Year Institutions: \$143 million.
- Private Nonprofit Four-Year Institutions: \$120 million.
- All Sectors Combined: \$413 million.

It is critical to note that these projections are merely partial reflections of the losses institutions face, as these figures calculate lost revenue only from tuition and fees. Most postsecondary institutions—particularly those in the public and private four-year sectors—face additional untold budget shortfalls this fall due to lost auxiliary revenues (namely, from room and board) and the high costs of compliance with new health regulations and the administration of COVID-19 tests to students, faculty, and staff.

As you know, higher education is one of New England’s most critical industries, the fourth largest in terms of overall economic impact. The region’s higher education institutions enroll more than 1 million students, employ more than 256,000 faculty and staff and pay over \$12.8 billion a year in salaries—for an annual economic impact of nearly \$23 billion. These institutions are the primary source of skilled talent consistently sought by employers in all industries. They also train the doctors, nurses and other essential workers providing care through the public health crisis. Their research and development drives innovation and is critical in developing any vaccines and treatments and in powering the region’s economic recovery.

Thank you for your consideration. We stand ready to assist and provide any additional information that you require.

Respectfully,



**Michael K. Thomas**  
President and CEO  
New England Board of Higher Education

On behalf of:

**Jane McBride Gates**  
Provost and Senior Vice President for  
Academic and Student Affairs  
Connecticut State Colleges and  
Universities

**Timothy Larson**  
Executive Director  
Connecticut Office of Higher Education

**Mark Ojakian**  
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